

Appl. No. 09/966,230
Amdt. dated August 5, 2004
Reply to Office action of May 6, 2004

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The examiner objected to the drawings, indicating that “the ‘first and second component relationship’ of claim 2; and the ‘stacked’ second component, as claimed in claim 10, must be shown or the feature(s) canceled from the claim(s).” Applicants respectfully traverse these objections. Claim 2 recites that the axially extending lip portion of the first race component is radially outward of the raceway portion of the first race component. Fig. 5 shows the axially extending lip portion (62) of the first race component (58) is radially outward of the raceway portion (56) of the first race component (58). The claimed invention is clearly shown in the drawings. Claim 10 recites that the second race component is staked, not “stacked” as indicated by the examiner. Figure 5 shows the second race component (64) having a retention portion (70). The specification explains at page 4, lines 17-18 that “the lip portion 68 may be staked radially inward, or curled radially inward, to form retention portion 70” As such, Fig. 5 illustrates the staked or curled retention portion 70, the claimed invention being clearly shown in the drawings.

The examiner rejected claim 3 under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, as failing to describe or show the axially extending lip portion of the first race component radially inward of the raceway portion of the first race component. Applicants respectfully traverse such rejection. The claimed invention is shown in Figs. 5 and 6 and described in the specification in the paragraph beginning on page 5, line 14. It is explained that Fig. 5 illustrates an inner thrust race comprising first and second race components 72 and 74. Examining first race component 72, the lip portion 78 is radially inward of the raceway portion 76.

The examiner rejected claims 3 and 10 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter of the invention. The examiner indicates that it is unclear what is meant by “the axially extending lip portion of the first race component is radially inward of the raceway portion of the first race component” and what the term “staked” means in claim 10. Applicants respectfully traverse such rejections. Applicants respectfully submit that claim 3 distinctly claims the subject matter of the invention. Fig. 5 clearly shows the central axis 60 around which the cylindrical raceway portion 76 of first race component 72 extends. The axial lip 78 is closest to the central axis 60, and therefore, is radially inward of the raceway portion 76. As for the term “staked” in claim 10, this

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is a known method of fastening two components together by causing a protrusion in one of the components. The process is shown and described with reference to Figs. 2 and 3 wherein elements 38 and 40 are described as staked portions. It is respectfully submitted that the term "staked" is clear and concise to one skilled in the art.

The examiner rejected claims 1, 3-4, 6 and 11 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,927,868 (Critchley et al.). Claims 2, 5, 7-10 and 12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being obvious in view of Critchley et al., alone or in combination with the applicants' prior art. The examiner rejected claims 1-12 under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,106,158 (Hayashi et al.) in view of U.S. Patent No. 3,370,898 (Bowen), alone or in combination with the applicants' prior art. Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections.

Independent claim 1 recites a thrust bearing with a first race component, a bearing cage, and a second race component including a lip portion extending axially and radially from the flat portion and beyond the lip portion of the first race component such that the second race component is engageable by the bearing cage to hold the first race component, the second race component and the bearing cage together as an assembly. Applicants respectfully submit that none of the cited references teach or suggest first and second race components. The examiner cites Critchley et al. element 34 and Bowen element 9 as being the second race components, however, these are not race components, but instead are housings into which the bearing is positioned. (See Critchley et al. at col. 2, lns. 52-55 and Bowen at col. 1, lns. 67-69.) Furthermore, these housings are not engageable by the bearing cage to hold the first race component, the second race component and the bearing cage together as an assembly. Critchley et al. housing 34 is not engageable by cage 18 and the housing 34 in no one retains the cage 18 as an assembly. Bowen does not include a cage and even if it did, the housing 9 is not configured to be engageable by a cage inside the shell 17. It is respectfully submitted that none of the cited references, alone or in any reasonable combination, teach or suggest the claimed invention.

It is respectfully submitted that pending claims 1-12 are in condition for allowance. Early reconsideration and allowance of the pending claims are respectfully requested.

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If the examiner believes an interview, either telephonic or in person, will advance the prosecution of this matter, it is respectfully requested that the examiner get in contact with the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,



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